

NATION-WIDE SERVICE FOR THE BLIND

An Editorial from
Outlook For the Blind
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OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND

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MAY, 1923

NATION-WIDE SERVICE FOR THE BLIND

The American Foundation for the Blind is now permanently established in its New York headquarters. The Foundation seeks to broadcast this news throughout the entire country to each and every agency engaged in work for the blind and the partially blind, and to forward to all such agencies the announcement—AT YOUR SERVICE!

It is the purpose of the Foundation to bring together the workers for the blind and to help to meet their needs. Since we all have like purposes and like problems, there exists an urge for fellowship in service. This urge the Foundation expects to satisfy. And how? By operating as a clearing house which extends Nation-wide Service and Co-operation to all existing agencies which serve the blind or the partially blind. Moreover, it is the purpose of the Foundation to initiate movements to establish associations throughout the states and to assist in forming state commissions and other agencies for the furtherance of which the Foundation will study and report upon the best methods of management and organization. There are now fourteen State Commissions. A commission or its equivalent in every state is one of the goals of the American Foundation.

An outline of the working plan of the Foundation will be developed as speedily as our funds and opportunities may permit. Action is our watchword; action will bring results. We must open the eyes and hearts of the public to see and to feel the need for work among the blind, and we know that we will lift public estimation of our work only in proportion to the results we obtain. With the sympathetic support and the cordial cooperation of the workers for the blind of the entire country the Foundation will be enabled to achieve its great purpose. "Remember, two-thirds of promotion is motion."

Work is now going forward under the direction of three bureaus: the Bureau of Information and Publicity, the Bureau of Research, and the Bureau of Education. The Foundation will cooperate with the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness and with all the Boards of Health and Education throughout the states, in the establishment of well equipped Conservation of Vision Classes in public schools.

For all people education is the light of life; for the blind it is their hope of happiness, the power which lifts them from their "dark profound" to take a place beside their seeing brothers. The Foundation plans to undertake a survey of occupations open to the blind, to make a compilation of occupations being undertaken by the blind in which they are succeeding both in America and abroad, and to disseminate this knowledge to all agencies in the various states. To insure good training, good instructors are necessary, hence the Foundation through its Bureau of Education will aim to discover the best methods for teacher training and to help to institute courses for this work.

blind men and women get a small fee and are also spiritually uplifted through the sense of the sacredness of their work.

Other Agencies

Mormonism has received stress in this article—not because it is the only activity utilizing the blind—but because it is an aspect of the work peculiar to Utah. We have many other agencies that are just as effective. The Junior Aid Society of Salt Lake, composed mostly of "Gentiles," or non-Mormons, has spared no effort in advancing the cause of the blind. It has provided entertainment and transportation, it has lent money and bought equipment, and it has sponsored concerts given by the blind. It is the beautiful expression of the kind and cultured thought of the city directed to the interests of the blind. The reading-room at Salt Lake, where the blind of the city gather four times a week to hear fiction and current events, is the creation of a Gentile woman and is sustained largely by Gentile donations. There are countless other organizations, large and small, that can be adapted to the good of the adult blind, but they are what might be found in Massachusetts or Michigan. The home teacher utilizes them all when a blind person is to be assimilated into normal society. Mormonism is not necessarily our chief offering, but surely our most distinctive.

The home department has been in operation in Utah three years. The "traveling teacher," as he is officially called, is a high school instructor at the Utah School for the Blind at Ogden, who spends his summer months in the field,

and also what time he can spare during the winter. Week end visits are made in the populous sections, and the summer is reserved for the long-distance trips into the sparser regions. It is often necessary to travel two-hundred and fifty miles by automobile to reach one or two pupils in remote corners. A total of sixteen thousand miles has been covered and two-hundred and fifty visits made. Many of the blind are still unreached, but several extended trips planned for the coming summer, should take care of them all, for initial visits, at least. Until now, the traveling fund has provided field expenses only, and that for a short time. There is now pending in the legislature a request for an appropriation that will permit the teacher to spend the twelve months of the year at work with the adults. With such resources, the present plans of the department should be well on their way to realization.

These plans include a co-ordination of all the work for the blind into a systematic whole, so organizing the blind that they shall be an appreciable power in their own behalf. The traveling teacher, in lieu of a commission or some other recognized agency, should be an intermediary between the blind and those phases of organized society that may be of assistance to the blind. His office should be a clearing house for all information regarding the blind, and an employment bureau where the job and the man are united. He should spend as much time with sighted prospects as with blind pupils, and never lose sight of the fact that his task is to rehabilitate and return certain stragglers to society.

In like manner, the best methods of training for field agents, home teachers and secretaries will be studied.

And what can we do for blind girls and boys of unusual promise? We can give them an opportunity for higher education, encouraging their efforts by providing scholarships and by helping to provide material required in the advanced studies. The Foundation hopes to inaugurate a system of scholarships, and as the work of the Foundation progresses, the system of education through scholarships will be enlarged. For those who are ambitious to qualify for professions, the Foundation will endeavor to provide a medium for securing such readers as are necessary.

Because of the tremendous expense in the production of embossed reading matter for the blind, production is continually curtailed. This means that one of the most essential aids to education and diversion is ill supplied. We propose to assist to increase the output of literature for the blind.

There remain other needs—studies of the management of industrial shops; of wages paid to the blind; and of employment of the blind in direct competition with the seeing; of the production and dissemination of literature for the blind; of recreation activities for blind children; and of club and other social activities.

The Foundation will make recommendation as to standardization of the best kind of local and state legislation for minimizing the handicap of blindness without pauperizing the blind.

Through the Bureau of Information and Publicity the public will receive information in regard to the work for the blind. A new directory is now being compiled. It will be our service diction-

ary and detailed information will be available therein. The Foundation will seek to cooperate in the employment for workers for the blind and it cordially invites associations in need of special workers to communicate with us. The *OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND* is now issued by the Foundation. This magazine is a fraternizing agent through which the workers for the blind can frankly discuss their problems, explain their activities, and report their progress. It explains what is being done for the blind in America. But the Foundation is likewise concerned with work abroad. It will act as a clearing house for workers for the blind for foreign countries, discovering through contact, through give and take of ideas, the way to better policies and conditions. This contact will allow for foreign exchange of literature on work for the blind. The Foundation will assemble a reference library of domestic and foreign books and periodicals relating to the work for the blind.

The corporation of the American Foundation for the Blind has no authorized capital stock; it is dependent upon the voluntary gifts of its patrons and friends. It is our purpose to stimulate the interest of the public, to gather friends into our fellowship of service, so that the Foundation may quickly realize the broad aims for which it was organized.

Our service is contingent upon your willingness to use us! Our organization must be built in your work. Our ability to serve depends upon the funds available! It is the desire of the Foundation to aid all the organizations to succeed in their work for the blind. The door of the American Foundation for the Blind is open to you, fellow workers.

We invite you to turn to us for help. What is your particular problem? Let us help you to solve it. What is your particular need? Let us help you to meet it.

WE ARE HERE TO SERVE!

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

The OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND since its inception in 1907 has been supported by a few organizations, a few liberal donors and many generous subscribers. The Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Adult Blind in 1907, when its original work was taken over by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, granted the request of its first executive secretary, Mr. Charles F. F. Campbell to underwrite the national magazine in ink print to be published in the interests of the blind. With great generosity this senior association for work for the adult blind in this country guaranteed to Mr. Campbell the deficit which would naturally be created while starting such a publication and for several years made up the entire loss on the publication. As the magazine endeared itself to workers for the blind throughout the country many schools, commissions, and workshops made liberal contributions. In addition to this, individuals gave generous annual contributions with the result that after the first five years the magazine was practically on a self-supporting basis, remembering that it depended upon the support of liberal associations and individuals.

As the magazine grew in interest and commended itself to the workers throughout the country for its conservative and cautious attitude, the two national agencies for the blind, the American Associa-

tion of Instructors of the Blind and the American Association of Workers for the Blind, officially endorsed the publication and announced to the public that it was issued under their auspices.

It is also interesting to note that the superintendents and executive officers of practically every known agency for the blind in the United States and Canada were willing to serve in the capacity of advisory board to the publication.

BOOK REVIEW

Winifred Holt's book, "The Light Which Cannot Fail" (E. P. Dutton & Co.), gives us fresh knowledge, pricks the conscience and wins the heart. Those who read it experience a fresh impulse to help their fellow-men "blinded in battle." Surely there was never a cause that made a more universal appeal, and an added sale of the book will swell the fund needed to carry on the French Lighthouse, for the publisher is generous and the author makes no claims for profits. (When did she ever do so in her long, faithful, magnificent fight for the blind?)

Apart from all these considerations the book itself is a wonderful record of events, written on the very soil where they occurred. There are day-by-day stories that make one feel anew that man is indeed made in the image of God. They might be heart-breaking were it not for the heroism, the resolute courage, the hope, the beauty, strength and tenderness that brightens every page.

Experts testify to the truth of Miss Holt's practical suggestions and her self-taught wisdom, but even the most casual reader will glow with sympathy because of the magic that lies in Miss Holt's

